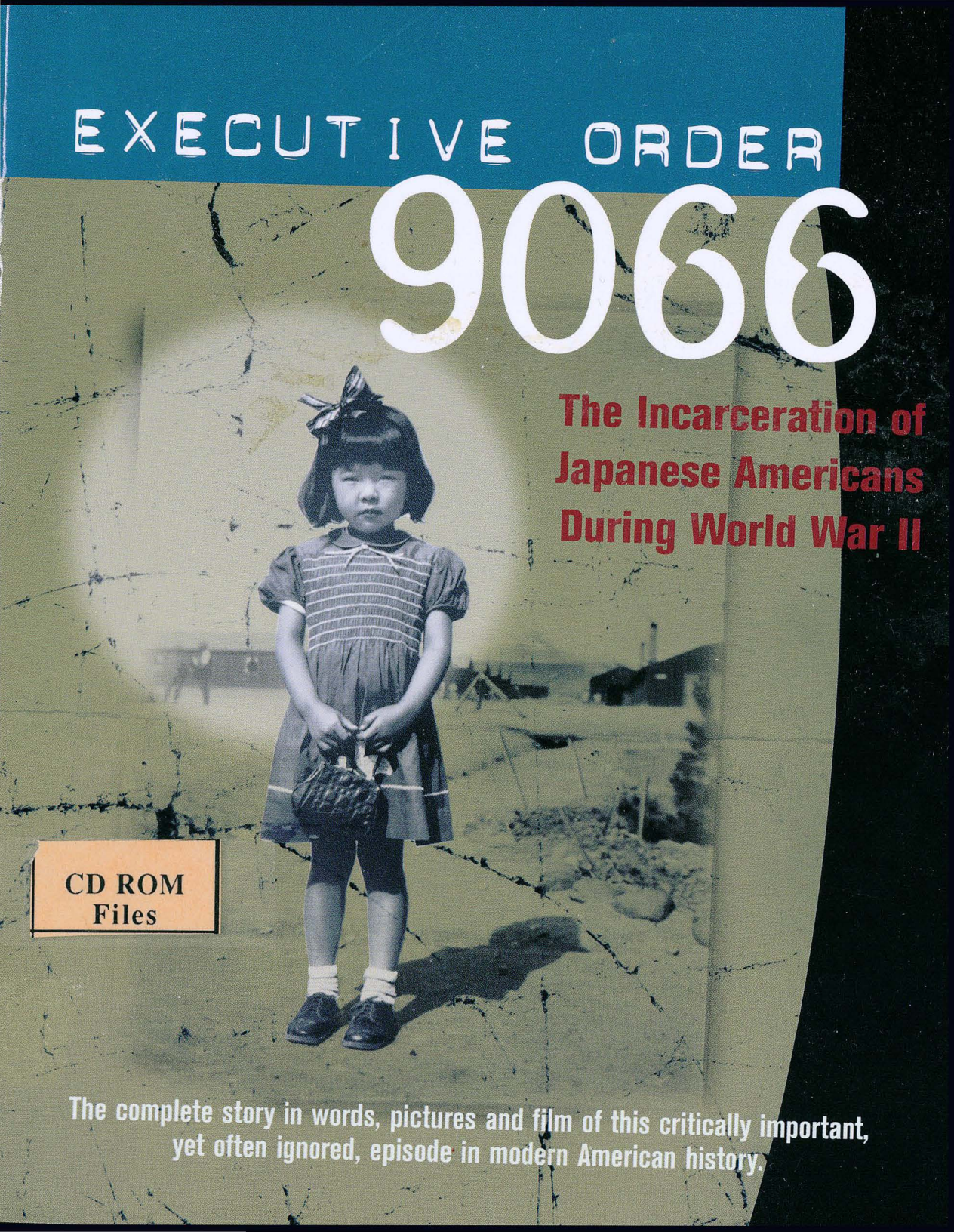
EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066

The Incarceration of Japanese Americans During World War II



CD ROM Files

The complete story in words, pictures and film of this critically important, yet often ignored, episode in modern American history.

A GUIDE TO

EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066:

The Incarceration of Japanese Americans During World War II

Grolier Educational
Danbury, Connecticut

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INTRODUCTION

This guide has been prepared to accompany the CD-ROM Executive Order 9066, which explores the imprisonment of more than 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry in the United States during World War II. The guide provides an overview of the structure of the CD-ROM, background information that can enhance students' use of the CD-ROM, questions and activities, and a list of resources for further study. By using this guide, students should develop a deeper understanding of the history of people of Japanese descent in the United States, the issues involved in their treatment during the war, and the struggle to obtain redress for this unjust treatment. These materials will help students realize that—in the words of the director of the Japanese American National Museum—"the experience of Japanese Americans has demonstrated that freedom can never be taken for granted, and justice must always be struggled for."

Overview of the CD-ROM

OVERALL STRUCTURE

About this CD-ROM: Background on the producers—UCLA's Film and Television Archive and the Japanese American National Museum; credits and acknowledgments
Main Menu: Access to information grouped in four headings: Topics; Places; Chronology; Profiles (for descriptions of each area, see below)
Overview: Introduction by actor Pat Morita and multimedia presentation providing a general view of the imprisonment of Japanese Americans during World War II

TOPICS (OFF MAIN MENU)

The 10 topics explore the following aspects of the Japanese American imprisonment during World War II:

Before the War: Issues and events in the lives of Japanese Americans from the 1880s to 1940
Forced Removal: The decision to forcibly exclude Japanese Americans from certain areas and place them in prison camps
The Camps: Basic facts about the camps
Friends: People who worked to end the incarceration or to help the prisoners
Life Behind Bars: Life in the camps, including art work created by prisoners
"Concentration Camps": The euphemisms used by the media and the government to justify the imprisonment
Resistance: Japanese Americans' efforts to oppose the injustices done to them
The story of Japanese Americans who served in the military during World War II
Returning to America: Release from the camps and readjustment to American society
The Struggle for Redress: Movement that began in the 1970s to rectify the injustice done to Japanese Americans incarcerated in the camps

PLACES (OFF MAIN MENU)

Statistics, images, and descriptions that detail each camp; map showing location of all camps; information on other areas where Japanese Americans were held in addition to the 10 relocation camps

CHRONOLOGY (OFF MAIN MENU)

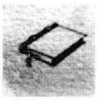
Multimedia timeline showing Japanese American history from the 1880s to the 1980s

PROFILES (OFF MAIN MENU)

Photos and text that relate the experiences of six individuals who lived in the camps

ICONS

The following icons appear on various screens. They indicate that additional resources are available from that screen:


Extracts from books


Still photographs


Video clips


Audio clips


A note-taking program


Move forward and backward through the Chronology


Move up and down through the text

The keyboard combination [Alt+F4] allows you to quit at any time.

Japanese in the United States Before World War II

The decision to imprison Japanese Americans during World War II did not occur in a vacuum. Rather, it was the culmination of some fifty years of anti-Japanese activity centered in California. This anti-Japanese movement was in turn shaped by America's long history of mistreating its people of color, in particular the anti-Chinese movement that culminated in the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. This law put a 10-year stop on immigration from China. The act was renewed for another 10 years in 1892 and made permanent in 1902.

JAPANESE AMERICANS

The first large-scale migration of Japanese laborers to the Kingdom of Hawaii (then independent of the United States) took place in 1885. This migration was influenced by the labor requirements of Hawaii's sugar plantations. Another factor was the pressure felt by Japanese peasants as a result of that nation's rapid modernization in the late 1800s. The first stage of Japanese immigration, in which laborers migrated under the sponsorship of the Japanese government, saw about 29,000 people journey to Hawaii from 1885 to 1898. Most of these immigrants came from the Kansai region in southern Japan.

In 1898, the United States seized Hawaii, making the islands a territory. Two years later, passage of a new law made the laborers' contracts invalid. Starting then, large numbers of Japanese began to move to the mainland United States. By 1907 about 70,000 had arrived directly from Japan, with another 38,000 coming to the West Coast from Hawaii. While the number of Japanese immigrants was large, it was a small part of the overall immigration of the period. Japanese were not even 1.5 percent of the total number of immigrants entering the United States from 1901 to 1910.

At first, Japanese immigrants were welcomed in the United States, but soon this changed. Businesses used them as a source of low-paid labor. Labor groups resented this, arguing that Japanese workers took the jobs of white Americans and held wages down. As the number of Chinese Americans shrank in the wake of the Chinese Exclusion Act, the growing number of Japanese Americans became the target of louder and nastier attacks. Angry white workers formed many groups opposed to Asians coming to the United States. One, the California-based Asiatic Exclusion League, issued bitter statements against the Japanese. The group urged Congress to extend the ban on Chinese immigration to include Japanese too.

In 1905, anti-Japanese feelings grew stronger. The San Francisco school board ordered that all Japanese students had to attend the city's "Oriental School." The government of Japan complained about the decision to President Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt knew that Japan had recently won a war with Russia, proving itself to have a strong, modern navy. He was unwilling to force an international incident. He sent two members of his Cabinet to investigate the affair and concluded that Californians were not concerned about schooling for the Japanese but immigration from Japan.

Roosevelt took two steps. He persuaded the school board to reverse its earlier decision. The result was only a half-victory of Japanese Americans, however. In 1907, Roosevelt and Japan reached the deal called the "Gentleman's Agreement." Roosevelt promised not to segregate Japanese students in American schools. Japan agreed to stop giving passports that allowed Japanese to come to the United States. At the same time, the U.S. government ruled that Japanese who had first moved to Hawaii, Mexico, or Canada could not enter the continental United States.

The Gentleman's Agreement did not completely halt immigration, though. It allowed the Japanese government to give passports to "the parents, wives, and children" of Japanese who already lived in the United States. This provision created a sudden boom in female immigration.

Up until the Gentleman's Agreement, immigrants from Japan were almost all male. Some were the wives of men who had come to the United States earlier. Many were newly married wives. Banned from marrying white women by a 1905 California law, unmarried Japanese American men had to look to Japan to find wives. Some crossed the Pacific Ocean and returned with their new wives to the United States. Others arranged marriages and then met their new wives for the first time when the women reached the United States. These wives were called "picture brides" because the husbands used photographs sent in advance to identify them. By 1911, then, about half of the immigrants from Japan were women.

All immigration from Japan came to an abrupt end in the middle 1920s. Across the United States, cries against immigrants from all areas—not just from Asia—were growing louder and louder. Finally the "nativists" who wanted limits on immigration won. In passing the Immigration Act of 1924, Congress put sharp limits on all immigration. The law threw out the Gentleman's Agreement and banned all immigration from Japan, even that of wives and children. Once signed, the law would go into effect in 36 days. Many people moved quickly to try to reunite their families, but not all succeeded.

THE JAPANESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY

With the arrival of large numbers of women, the Japanese American community changed. The number of families grew. The number of children increased.

The arrival of these children, born in the United States, raised issues for the Japanese American community. Japanese Americans identified two distinct generations. The Issei, who had emigrated from Japan, were the first generation. Men tended to have been in the United States longer than women, and they tended to be a few years older. The Nisei, born in the United States, were the second generation. The Issei worried that their Nisei children were not learning Japanese values. The Nisei, for their part, felt caught between the Japanese culture of their parents and the American culture in which they grew up.

The two generations were split in another way as well. Because of federal laws and court rulings, the Issei were not allowed to become citizens. Their children—born in the United States—were American citizens, though. The vast majority of Issei would probably have become citizens if given the chance. Many did so after the McCarran-Walter Act finally made this possible in 1952.

After 1910, the lives of Japanese Americans changed. More and more began to live in cities. By 1940, more than half of all Japanese Americans were urban dwellers. Still, farming remained a major occupation. Fewer Japanese Americans lived in cities than among the nation as a whole.

The number of Japanese Americans who owned their own business had grown as well. From 1915 to 1930, the number of Issei who owned their own farms rose from 18 percent to 59 percent. Many Japanese Americans who lived in cities owned their own businesses. These statistics show success born of years of hard work and close cooperation. Over time, families and friends pooled their money to help each other build better lives.

As with immigrants from many other lands, Japanese had not always intended to stay in the United States when they first came. Over time, though, their ideas changed. One Issei man told what was a typical story of his own transformation:

> *When I had come to the States, I had intended to go back to Japan after saving a certain amount of money, but once I began life in the States, things didn't work out that way. . . . Thinking all the time that I could go back to Japan "sometime," I put down roots in America.*

Japanese Americans made economic advances despite discrimination and prejudice. The state legislature of California passed the Alien Land Law in 1913. It barred any person who was an "alien ineligible for citizenship" —that is, all Asian immi-

grants—from owning land in the state. Other states soon followed suit. Japanese Americans found ways around such laws. Since the children born in the United States were citizens, they often bought land in the name of the children and then had themselves named as trustees.

Discrimination took its toll, however. Between 1920 and 1942, in every year but one, more Issei *left* the United States than arrived. By the end of that period, more than 30,000 Japanese Americans had left the country—about one third of those who had come in the first place.

In one respect, the picture of Japanese Americans in the 1930s was similar to that of the 1890s. Japanese Americans were concentrated in Hawaii (55 percent) and the West Coast (39 percent), especially California. Only about 7 percent lived in other regions. Because they lived in fairly large communities, Japanese Americans in California had strong community groups.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What factors shaped Japanese immigration to the United States?
2. How was the experience of Japanese Americans similar to and different from that of Chinese Americans?
3. What rules governed Japanese immigration to the United States?
4. What limits were placed on the rights of Japanese Americans?

PROJECTS

1. Construct a timeline from the events discussed here. Compare it to the events in the "Chronology" section of the *Executive Order 9066* CD-ROM.
2. Do further research on either the Chinese Exclusion Act, the Gentleman's Agreement, or the Immigration Act of 1924. What were the exact provisions? How did they affect Japanese Americans?
3. View the topic "Before the War" in the CD-ROM. Choose an image or quotation and explain how it reflects the trends discussed here.

Growing Tension in the Pacific

While Japanese Americans faced discrimination, Japan and the United States felt rising tension. Eventually that tension erupted into war.

CAUSES OF CONFLICT

One reason for a growing split between the two nations was U.S. immigration policy. The government of Japan had hoped to win equal treatment from the United States and Europe. The 1924 Immigration Act was seen as an insult. The government of Japan protested to the United States. Japan declared July 1, 1924—when the U.S. law was to take effect—a "National Humiliation Day." Some Japanese spoke of boycotting, or refusing to buy, American goods. In the late 1800s, in the midst of the drive to modernize, the Japanese had admired the United States. The new law began changing those attitudes.

Another cause of growing tension was increasing conflict in the Pacific Ocean. Japan itself had few resources. To fuel industrial growth, it needed access to iron, oil, and other materials from other countries. The Great Depression of the 1930s weakened the economies of the industrial world. Many nations, including the United States, responded by putting up barriers to trade in the hopes of protecting their own industries. Because of these moves, Japan's economy began to suffer. One way to ensure that it obtained the raw materials it needed was to take control of those resources. Japan began to use its army and navy to gain that control. The United States often reacted angrily to these actions.

STEPS TOWARD WAR

Japanese growth began in the Chinese province of Manchuria, which it invaded in 1931 and completely controlled by the following year. The United States and the League of Nations protested the invasion. Japan simply withdrew from the League of Nations and ignored the protests. The conflict in China continued, growing into a full-scale war in 1937. The United States again expressed its outrage at the widening war. It also began supplying weapons to the Chinese, which angered Japan. In 1939, the United States took another step, ending a long-term trade agreement with Japan.

As World War II broke out in Europe, developments affected the Pacific. Germany conquered France and Holland in 1940 and late in the year began a steady bombing of Great Britain. As a result, the Asian colonies of these three countries became largely without defenses. Japan saw an opportunity to gain control of more resources. It

tried to convince France to let Japanese troops occupy ports in French colonies of Southeast Asia.

Again, tensions rose. The United States warned Japan to leave the colonies alone. President Franklin Roosevelt put an embargo—a ban on trade—on exports to Japan. The U.S. Congress passed a law that launched a huge new building program that would enable the navy to maintain fleets in two oceans. These actions drove a wedge deeper between the two nations. Later in the year, Roosevelt banned trade of steel and scrap iron to Japan. The next day, Japan signed an agreement with Germany and Italy. The pact stated that each nation would help the other two if they were attacked by any power not already involved in the war. Since all of Europe and China were already fighting, this was a clear reference to the United States.

In 1941, Japanese troops entered the French colonies in Southeast Asia. Roosevelt responded by banning the export of oil to Japan and persuading the British and Dutch to follow suit. As a result, Japan had only enough oil to run its economy and support its armed forces for a few weeks. The United States demanded that Japan withdraw from China and Southeast Asia. Japan refused, replying that if the trade bans continued, it would respond with force.

Talks between the two nations continued in Washington, D.C., and Tokyo. In late November 1941, the United States added new demands: that Japan end its agreement with Germany and Italy and sign a pledge not to attack other Asian nations. Japan, for its part, insisted that the United States stop sending weapons to the Chinese and remove the trade barriers. Neither side was willing to compromise.

On December 7, 1941, the Japanese navy attacked the main Pacific base of the U.S. Navy at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The attack was devastating because the U.S. Army and Navy were ill prepared—even though officers had been warned that an attack might be coming. Many ships were sunk, and almost all the planes at nearby air bases were destroyed. The next day, the United States declared war on Japan.

REACTION IN THE UNITED STATES

Americans were shocked by the attack on Pearl Harbor, but initially newspaper editorials called for calm, and there was no overt backlash. However, as time went on and the Japanese continued to win victories in the Pacific, the mood turned ugly against Japanese Americans. Racist attitudes formed part of the foundation of this response. Propaganda during the 1930s had said that the Japanese were cowardly and poor fighters. The success of the attack on Pearl Harbor undercut these ideas.

Rumors swirled around Hawaii and the West Coast that Japanese Americans had aided in the attack and were ready to engage in sabotage. High government officials

fanned these fires. Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, not more than a week after Pearl Harbor, blamed the attack on the "treachery" of Japanese Americans acting as spies. He repeated the charge later. "There was a considerable amount of evidence," he told Congress, "of subversive activity on the part of the Japanese prior to the attack."

Actually, there was no such evidence, as officials in the federal government knew. In late 1941, as war with Japan loomed, the State Department had conducted a special study of Japanese Americans. Curtis Munson, the journalist who prepared the report, concluded that Japanese Americans posed no threat to the United States. In fact, Munson said he found a "remarkable, even extraordinary degree of loyalty" among Japanese Americans. The report was circulated in several departments of the U.S. government and even after Pearl Harbor, Munson repeated his position. He was apparently ignored, however. Later, the government never revealed Munson's report when the issue of imprisoning Japanese Americans was discussed. Some in the government continued to spread lies about the loyalty of these people. They did so even though not a single Japanese American was ever found to be guilty of any act of sabotage during the war.

Right after Pearl Harbor, though, law enforcement officials moved quickly against Japanese Americans. Working with lists drawn up years before, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in just one day arrested 1,300 people who were considered "dangerous aliens." By the end of the month, 2,000 more had been arrested. They arrested business leaders, heads of Japanese American organizations, and Buddhist priests—anyone who held a position of leadership. They even arrested people who taught the Japanese language. A member of the Justice Department later admitted "we picked up too many" and called the charges leveled against many of these people "silly."

Interestingly, fewer arrests were made in Hawaii than in California even though more Japanese Americans lived there and the area was much closer to combat. Other differences in the treatment of Japanese Americans in Hawaii and California would continue throughout the war.

In early 1942, as the Japanese army won more victories in Asia, Americans' fears grew. Newspaper headlines began to scream that Japanese Americans were spying for Japan. "Japanese Here Sent Vital Data to Tokyo," said one. Others used far more vicious language reflecting intense racism. By March 1942, a public opinion poll showed that 93 percent of those questioned thought that Japanese Americans who had been born in Japan should be relocated. The same poll showed that almost 60 percent of the respondents thought that Japanese Americans who had been born in the United States and were citizens should be moved as well. In this rising climate of fear and hysteria, Japanese Americans would soon suffer.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What events led to war between the United States and Japan?
2. What was the response of American people to the attack on Pearl Harbor?
3. What did the Munson Report conclude?
4. How did the government act towards Japanese Americans right after Pearl Harbor?

PROJECT

1. Study newspaper or newsmagazine reports of the first months of World War II in the Pacific. What attitudes toward the Japanese are revealed by the words used in these reports? What impact do you think those attitudes would have on Japanese Americans?

The Decision to Place Japanese Americans in Camps

Despite no evidence that Japanese Americans posed any threat to the United States, high-ranking government officials continued to say the opposite. Journalists and others joined in calls to forcibly move Japanese Americans from the West Coast. Early in 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 allowing that to take place. As a scholar of constitutional law later said, "One hundred thousand persons were sent to concentration camps on a record which wouldn't support a conviction for stealing a dog."

CALLS FOR RELOCATING JAPANESE AMERICANS

Japanese Americans in California suffered immediately after the war began. The governor fired all Japanese Americans who worked in the state government. Those who were doctors and lawyers had their licenses revoked. The state attorney general Earl Warren supported these moves. (Later Warren became Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court and led the Court to decisions that helped African Americans win their civil rights.) He also urged forcing Japanese Americans out of California. He claimed that they owned "strategic" pieces of land all over the state so that they could engage in sabotage.

Newspapers and civic groups began to make loud, frequent calls for excluding Japanese Americans from California few weeks after Pearl Harbor. Columnist Henry McLemore, writing in the *San Francisco Examiner* in January 1942, summed up the view. "I am for immediate removal of every Japanese on the West Coast to a point deep in the interior," he wrote. Groups like the American Legion and the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West joined the chorus. Members of Congress from Washington, Oregon, and California wrote a letter to Roosevelt urging him to take the step. Some spoke of the idea as one of "relocating" the Japanese Americans to "camps." These were simply euphemisms to make the idea sound better. What they advocated was the forcible removal of people from their homes and their placement in prisons.

In the middle of February, as federal officials discussed the idea, another journalist was heard from. Walter Lippmann—a very influential national columnist—wrote a strong column urging "a policy of mass evacuation and mass internment."

Some urged the policy for economic reasons. Hard work had made farms owned by Japanese Americans into some of the most productive land on the West Coast.

Other people wanted those farms. This motivation was known in Washington as the policy was debated. Attorney General Francis Biddle pointed it out to Franklin Roosevelt two days before the president signed the executive order. "Various special interests," Biddle wrote, "would welcome [their] removal from good farm land and the elimination of their competition."

Some of those "special interests" admitted as much. A man who represented an association of white farmers frankly said "We're charged with wanting to get rid of the [Japanese Americans] for selfish reasons. We might as well be honest. We do." Most associations of farmers on the West Coast backed the idea, as did the chambers of commerce of almost every city and town on the coast.

Economic factors explain why Japanese Americans in Hawaii received different treatment. Navy Secretary Knox urged removing them from the island of Oahu, where Pearl Harbor was located. Such a move would have meant the loss of one-third of the island's work force, however. As a result, army and navy officers in Hawaii opposed the idea. The plan was never put into effect. Thus, thousands of Japanese Americans continued to live close to one of the nation's most important bases for the duration of the war. Meanwhile, those who lived on the West Coast—far from combat zones—were forced out of their homes.

The main explanation for this action was racism. No similar efforts were directed against German or Italian Americans, even though the country was at war against Germany and Italy as well. Some German or Italian American aliens were arrested, but they were not held as long as Japanese American aliens were. And it was racism that prevented these Japanese Americans from ever having the chance to become citizens, as German or Italian Americans could. Finally, no American citizens of German or Italian ancestry were ever arrested, as was the case with tens of thousands of Japanese Americans.

DECISION MADE

While other officials agreed with Knox, there was opposition to the idea of relocating Japanese Americans as well, even in the government. FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover thought the action was unnecessary. The FBI, he said, had arrested any dangerous people already. Anyone who was not arrested was safe. Intelligence officers of the U.S. Navy—whose work had been used by Munson in making his report—agreed with Hoover.

Attorney General Biddle opposed the idea as well. He blasted journalists for their fiery writings against Japanese Americans. He pointed out that since a large number of Japanese Americans—the Nisei born in the United States—were citizens, any

forced removal would violate their constitutional rights. Still, Biddle was unable to persuade Roosevelt. He later regretted that he had not fought harder against it.

Army officers supported the idea, claiming "military necessity." General John L. DeWitt, placed in command of the West Coast, considered all Japanese Americans "dangerous." Secretary of War Henry Stimson agreed, and President Roosevelt ignored the objections of Biddle and accepted the idea. On February 19 he signed Executive Order 9066. The order allowed the army to set up certain military areas and to exclude "any or all persons" from those areas. The order did not specify the West Coast or Japanese Americans, but it was mainly used in that area against those people.

DeWitt acted quickly. On March 2, he split the West Coast into two areas that were declared military zones. He called for Japanese Americans to move from the zone farthest west—along the coast—into the interior. Over the next few weeks, about 8,000 Japanese Americans did just that. They had great difficulty finding acceptance elsewhere in the country, however. Many, without the money to move or the contacts to start a new life someplace else, could not leave even if they wanted to.

Meanwhile, more steps were being taken in Washington. Congress passed a law that made it a crime to disobey any army order issued under the authority of Executive Order 9066. This was the tool that could be used to force compliance. Roosevelt set up a new agency, the War Relocation Authority (WRA), to take charge of the work of removing and imprisoning Japanese Americans. Milton Eisenhower—brother of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the commander of all the armies allied against Germany—was named to head the WRA. (Eisenhower resigned some months later and was replaced by Dillon S. Myer.)

Back on the coast, DeWitt was moving faster. On March 23, he ordered that all Japanese Americans living on Bainbridge Island, off Washington state, had to leave their homes—in one week. Later in the month, DeWitt decided that not enough Japanese Americans were leaving on a voluntary basis. On March 27, he put a freeze on any further movement. Three days later, he issued Civilian Exclusion Order No. 20. The order was posted in a Japanese American neighborhood. It said that all Japanese Americans—both Issei and their native-born offspring—would be forced to move.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What steps were taken against Japanese Americans in California shortly after World War II began?
2. What were the reasons underlying the movement to forcibly remove Japanese Americans?

3. How did the treatment of Japanese Americans in Hawaii and on the West Coast differ?
4. What government officials opposed relocation of Japanese Americans? Why?
5. What official documents formed the basis for relocating Japanese Americans? What did each document say?

PROJECTS

1. In the "Forced Removal" topic of *Executive Order 9066*, click on the headline "The Pacific Coast" to view a political cartoon. Explain the message of the cartoon.
2. In the "Forced Removal" topic, read the Exclusion Order that is available on the second screen. Imagine you are a Japanese American first reading this order or a soldier posting it. Write a letter to a friend describing your reaction to it.
3. Review the material in the "Friends" topic of the CD-ROM. Summarize what efforts people made to try to help Japanese Americans.

Forced Removal

The government transferred Japanese Americans to their new prisons in two stages. First the army forcibly rounded them up and took them to "assembly centers." Then they were transported to one of the 10 "Relocation Centers"—the prison camps where they would live during the war.

MOVING TO THE ASSEMBLY CENTERS

The process of moving Japanese Americans was handled with brisk military efficiency that hid the injustice being done. Soldiers entered a Japanese American neighborhood and posted a sign telling people that they had from three to seven days to dispose of their property. They had to sell their homes and their furniture, their farms and their businesses.

Once the signs were posted, whites came to the area to buy the property at ridiculously low prices, often less than a third of their value. Jeanne Wakatsuki recalled when a man showed up at her home to buy her family's good china plates. He offered $15 for a set worth $200. Her mother, angry and frustrated, smashed the plates rather than let the man have them. One estimate says that Japanese Americans lost $70 million in farmland and equipment and nearly half a billion dollars in yearly income.

On the appointed day, the Japanese Americans had to show up at a "Civil Control Station." The government directed them to bring only a few possessions—sheets and blankets, plates and flatware for eating, and clothes. They were given a number and packed onto army trucks or buses with the windows covered by drawn shades. In this way, a fearful group, with no idea what would happen or where it was going, was taken to an "assembly center," actually a temporary detention center.

The 15 temporary detention centers were located in large spaces that the government could quickly convert to provide temporary facilities for large numbers of people. The army used fairgrounds, race tracks, and even the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California. The facilities were crude. Many people shared the lavatories and showers, giving no one any privacy. The people who were sent to racetracks slept in what had—just days before—been horse stalls. One later remembered the day she arrived: "We opened the folded spring cots lying on the floor of the rear room and sat on them in semidarkness. We heard someone crying in the next stall."

Whatever they were called, the centers were actually prisons, surrounded by barbed wire. Armed soldiers with guard dogs patrolled the area. Some stood in watch towers that held machine guns. Reaching these areas, the Japanese Americans felt shock. As one later recalled, "This evacuation did not seem too unfair until we got

right to the camp and were met by soldiers with guns and bayonets. Then I almost started screaming."

They were reminded constantly that they were prisoners, though they had committed no crime. Each night they had to meet curfews, and at the beginning and end of each day they were counted to make sure that none had left without permission. They lived in these squalid conditions until more permanent accommodations at prison camps in the interior of the United States were completed. The average stay at a center was about four months.

The process of moving about 120,000 Japanese Americans took many months. Still, by August 7, General DeWitt said that they had all been moved out of their homes. By November, all were in the long-term camps.

"RELOCATION" CAMPS

Eight of the 10 "relocation"—actually prison—camps were in dry parts of the western states. Two were in swampy areas of Arkansas. They were built on land owned by the federal government that had no productive use. They were desolate, isolated places. The camps were built to hold the prisoners for long periods of time. Still, they were put together so hastily and cheaply that they were not very sturdy. If they stand up for the duration of the war, Director Eisenhower told Congress, "we are going to be lucky."

Families of five to eight people lived in rooms that were 20 feet by 24 feet. Four to six of these families lived in the same building. A cluster of 12 to 14 of these barracks was called a block. Each block shared a dining hall, lavatories, showers, and a recreation building. Other buildings in the camp included hospitals and schools.

Not all Japanese Americans were taken to one of these camps. Those who had been arrested early in the war were sent to camps run by the Justice Department. About two-thirds of them stayed there the entire war—longer than most German or Italian Americans who were arrested. The few who won their release were not set free but sent to one of the WRA camps.

LIFE IN THE CAMPS

Japanese Americans made heroic efforts to make life in the camps pleasant. Some planted seeds to create gardens; others constructed traditional Japanese rock gardens. Many joined in work needed to keep the camps running smoothly by cooking or cleaning, doing laundry, and handling other chores. Some set up schools to teach the children

who formed a large part of the camp population. There were churches and recreation halls, sports teams and dances, newspapers and exercise programs.

Despite these attempts at living something like a normal life, the camps were still prisons, and the physical and pychological toll was tremendous. In addition, camp life completely disrupted Japanese American society. With families living close to one another—and with walls built only part-way to the ceiling—there was little privacy. Fathers lost the authority they had traditionally enjoyed. Women gained more independence. Older children found themselves more free than they had been in their homes. Mothers had difficulty controlling their younger children.

The situation in the camps also led to some generational conflict. While relations must be seen on an individual basis, some generalizations can be made. WRA officials favored the Nisei, citizens by birth, over the Issei. Some of the Nisei promoted cooperation and avoided causing trouble. They hoped in this way to convince the WRA to let the prisoners return home. WRA officials tended to give the better jobs in the camps to Nisei. Issei who had been leaders in the community felt some resentment at their loss of status. They mocked the councils formed in the camps, which largely had Nisei members. They pointed out that the councils enjoyed no real authority because the WRA decided everything.

Sometimes bad feeling erupted into violence. Some of those Nisei who cooperated were viewed with suspicion. They were thought to have accused others in the community of disloyalty and were called *inu*, or "dogs"—spies for the government. Sometimes these individuals were attacked. The WRA separated some of these people from other prisoners for their safety. Violent protests were also lodged against the WRA. Workers sometimes formed unions that campaigned or went on strike for better wages. Angry prisoners protested the lack of privacy and other conditions.

THE LOYALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

Perhaps the most difficult situation in the camps revolved around the so-called loyalty questionnaire introduced early in 1943. In January of that year, President Roosevelt said that Japanese Americans who were citizens could serve in the army. At the same time there was a growing movement inside the WRA to allow "loyal" Japanese Americans to leave the camps. Hoping to speed this process, the WRA gave a questionnaire to all the prisoners.

Two key questions created difficulties. Question 27 asked if the person was willing to serve in the armed forces, wherever ordered. Question 28 asked the person to pledge his or her loyalty to the United States and renounce any allegiance to any other country, including Japan.

The first question bothered many for its hypocrisy. Many Japanese Americans had volunteered for the armed forces before the incarceration but had been refused. Now the government that had imprisoned them was asking them to fight for it. The question was posed to everyone, regardless of age or gender. The second question was as troubling. Many Nisei feared that a yes answer could be taken to mean that they had once had some allegiance to another government—which, as American citizens, would be admitting to treason. For the Issei, answering yes would abandon their Japanese citizenship. Since American law prevented them from becoming U.S. citizens, they would become people without a country. In addition, it was announced that families would be broken up if members answered the questions differently.

Some Issei pressured their children to answer no to both questions, fearing separation and feeling angry over their imprisonment. Many Nisei felt equally angry and were happy to oblige. Others thought that by answering yes to both, they could ensure that their parents would receive fair treatment. Family discussions were intense and painful, one prisoner remembered. "People walked the roads, tears streaming down their troubled faces, silent and suffering. The little apartments were not big enough for the tremendous battle that waged in practically every room," she wrote.

In the end, only about 1,250 Nisei men volunteered for the armed forces—out of 23,606 who were of age. For Nisei in Hawaii, who had never been imprisoned, the situation was different. About 10,000 of them volunteered. They served primarily in two segregated, all-Japanese units, the 100th Infantry and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. They fought in Europe and proved themselves brilliant, loyal soldiers. The 442nd had the highest casualty rate of any military unit in the war. It was also the most decorated unit of its size in U.S. military history. Other Nisei served in the Military Intelligence Service in the Pacific. They worked as translators and interpreters and helped understand Japanese map and battle plans. Many Nisei women served as well, joining the Women's Army Corps (WACs).

Those that had answered no to both questions made a painful decision. Still, many felt they could no longer exist in a nation that did not recognize their rights. Called "no-no boys," they were all sent to the Tule Lake camp in northern California. Those at Tule Lake who answered yes to both questions were sent to other camps.

RENUNCIATION AND RESISTANCE

Tule Lake became a hotbed of political activity for a long time. A vocal group of critics of the WRA and the camps formed, and the army took over the camps. The Army's administration was harsher than that of the civilian WRA. Over time, some more defiant prisoners were beaten and placed in solitary confinement. As anger and frustration

increased, a few thousand prisoners renounced their American citizenship and asked to be sent to Japan. When the situation later calmed, many of these "renunciants" changed their minds. The work of lawyer Wayne Collins helped many of them have their citizenship reinstated on the grounds that earlier statements had been made under pressure. In the end, fewer than 5,000 Japanese Americans returned to Japan after the war. Others resisted the draft even though they had answered "yes" to both loyalty questions. A strong group of draft resisters formed at Heart Mountain, Wyoming. Calling themselves the Fair Play Committee, they issued a strong statement.

> *We are not afraid to risk our lives for our country. We would gladly sacrifice our lives to protect and uphold the principles and ideals of our country as set forth in the Constitution and Bill of Rights. . . freedom, liberty, justice and protection of all peoples, including Japanese Americans and other minority groups.*

But they refused to be drafted unless those rights were restored to them. Eighty-five prisoners at Heart Mountain were found guilty of draft evasion, and leaders were convicted of conspiracy. After the war ended, then-President Harry Truman gave pardons to all these and more than 230 other Japanese Americans who had resisted the draft.

COURT CASES

From the beginning, some Japanese Americans had challenged the legality of the actions taken against their people. It took many months for those cases to be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Gordon Hirabayashi was a Nisei college student in Washington who hoped to challenge the legality of the curfew orders that were one of the first steps taken against Japanese Americans (before they were forcibly moved out of the West Coast). He was arrested and spent five months in jail. In June 1943, the nine justices of the Supreme Court ruled unanimously that the curfew was legal because of "military necessity."

Fred Korematsu's case challenged the order that forced Japanese Americans out of certain areas of the country and moved them to the camps. In late 1944, the Supreme Court ruled against Korematsu, but only on the first issue. This decision was split, however, at 6-3. Justice Frank Murphy blasted the decision as a "legalization of racism."

In deciding both these cases, the Court relied heavily on army and government documents charging that Japanese Americans posed a serious security risk. Those documents were lies, and contrary evidence—such as the Munson report—were not offered for the justices' review. Many decades later, the decisions would be overturned because of this government deception.

At the same time the Court considered the Korematsu case, it also debated a case involving Mitsuye Endo. Endo was a citizen who had been found by the WRA to be loyal and thus was eligible to be moved out of the camp. Despite that fact, she was kept in Topaz, Utah, because the WRA could not find a community to move her to. She sued to be released. On the same day as the Korematsu decision, the Court ruled unanimously in Endo's favor. The Endo decision meant that all loyal Japanese Americans would have the right to leave the camps.

The Endo decision came on the same day that the Roosevelt administration announced that the military situation had improved and Japanese Americans could be allowed back on the West Coast.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How did the relocation cause economic suffering?
2. What were Japanese Americans allowed to bring to the relocation camps?
3. How quickly was the relocation carried out?
4. What impact did the relocation have on Japanese American society?
5. What problems were caused by the 1943 questionnaire?
6. Explain who the "renunciants" were.
7. How did Japanese Americans respond to the issue of service in the armed forces?
8. Describe three significant legal cases involving Japanese Americans.

PROJECTS

1. Review the information about the camps in the "Places" section of the *Executive Order 9066* CD-ROM. Write a news report describing the camps based on the photographs you see and the descriptions you read.
2. Study the map of the Manzanar camp in the "Overview" section of the CD-ROM. List the facilities in the camp.
3. Go to the section about George Takei in "Profiles" on the CD-ROM. Click on the photograph of the truck and read the passage from Takei's book. Create a political cartoon reflecting the situation from his point of view.
4. Study the photographs in the "Life Behind Bars" topic of the CD-ROM. What activities are shown?
5. Go to the section on Frank Emi in "Profiles" on the CD-ROM. Read the newspaper article from the Heart Mountain *Sentinel*. Write an essay comparing the statement by the Fair Play Committee reprinted in this guide to the reasoning used by Judge Kennedy.

Release, Readjustment, Redress

Dillon Myer, second director of the WRA, disliked the idea of the prison camps from the start. He quickly began to seek ways to allow Japanese Americans to leave the camps, although his plan was to disperse them throughout the United States rather than letting them return to their homes.

RELEASE PROGRAMS

As early as the fall of 1942, the WRA allowed some prisoners to work on farms in nearby areas. The purpose was to take advantage of their willingness to work and to prevent food from rotting in the fields. As many as 1,500 from Heart Mountain in Wyoming worked to save the sugar beet crop in western states and won great praise from state officials for their work. They had to return to their camps when the work was finished, however. Some young adults were helped by groups such as the American Friends Service Committee to attend colleges and universities and complete their education.

At the same time, the WRA began a program of releasing individual prisoners who could get work in areas away from the West Coast. Under pressure from the army, leaves were temporary, but the WRA pushed the program. It set up nine offices in the East and Midwest to try to find jobs for Japanese Americans.

The WRA hoped to release prisoners to cut the cost of running the camps. They also wanted to make use of the prisoners' labor in a time of severe labor shortages. Finally, Director Myer hoped to give Japanese Americans a chance to rejoin society. He also argued that only by releasing these people could the United States effectively fight its propaganda war with Japan. The Japanese government declared that the camps showed American claims to equal rights to be a lie.

Myer was backed by Attorney General Biddle, who late in 1943 wrote President Roosevelt that continuing to hold Japanese Americans who were citizens in the camp was "dangerous and repugnant" to American freedoms. Another supporter was Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes. The WRA was placed under the Interior Department in February 1944, and Ickes publicly blasted calls for even harsher treatment, labeling them as "vindictive, bloodthirsty onslaughts of professional race-mongers." Privately, he urged Roosevelt to allow the release of all prisoners found to be loyal. The president, running for re-election, feared that such a decision would cost him support, especially in California. He postponed action until after November.

The 1943 questionnaire fiasco grew out of a WRA attempt to identify those who were loyal and could be moved out of the camps. The questionnaire was actually

called an "Application for Leave Clearance." The WRA did not allow Japanese Americans to move back to the West Coast. This was, in part, a desire to prevent their concentration in that part of the country. It also grew out of fear of how they would be treated. Anti-Japanese feeling was still very high. Over time, several thousand people did move out of the camps, finding jobs, homes, and even some acceptance in mainstream American society.

By January 1945, however, 75,000 people still lived in the camps. That month, the government finally lifted the exclusion order that forbade Japanese Americans from returning to military zones 1 or 2, and allowed Japanese Americans to return to the West Coast. The WRA opened offices in Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles to help people settle in those areas once again.

The first returnees needed help. Racist attacks—both verbal and physical—erupted up and down the coast. An American Legion post in Oregon blotted out the names of Japanese American soldiers on an honor roll. Whites burned Japanese American property and threatened the people. A crowd of 3,500 attended an anti-Japanese rally in a California town. Returning veterans received insults despite having fought for the country.

The trickle of returnees grew over time, and by December 1945, all the camps but one—Tule Lake—were closed. The WRA pushed the remaining prisoners out in early 1946, taking little care to help them even though those who remained were often the oldest and least well. In March 1946, seven months after the end of World War II, Tule Lake closed.

READJUSTMENT

Japanese Americans had a difficult time adjusting after the war. They were now more dispersed than they had been before—whereas 90 percent lived on the West Coast before the war, only about two thirds did so in the early years after the war. Community institutions were broken by the conflict between generations and the destructive period in the camps. The loss of property and money was devastating as well.

They suffered emotionally as well. The Issei generally did not reveal their feelings; many adopted the attitude called *gaman*, or endurance. The Nisei suffered deep feelings of shame because they had been punished for who they were. Michi Weglyn wrote of the Nisei's "psychic damage." Jeanne Wakatsuki wrote of feeling "shame for being a person guilty of something enormous enough to deserve that kind of treatment." Many Nisei said nothing about their experience for many years. Fred Korematsu never spoke of his court case to his own children. His son first heard of it in a high school class.

By the 1950s, the Japanese American population on the West Coast rose as people returned there from other areas. They tended to settle more in cities, and the number of Japanese Americans living in rural areas was lower than before the war. Still, the total number of Japanese Americans living on the coast never reached prewar levels.

Economically, Japanese Americans rebounded and surpassed where they had been before. According to one observer, the Nisei "embarked on a relentless pursuit of middle-class status." By the early 1960s, five times *fewer* Japanese Americans worked as laborers than before the war. Almost five times more worked in professions, and they found fewer racial barriers to being able to fully pursue their professions. Income was up, too—although not equal to that of white workers.

Some Nisei became active in politics. This was particularly true in Hawaii, where they came to play an important role in the drive to statehood. It also occurred in the mainland United States as well. Some won the fight to end the Alien Land Laws that prevented their parents from owning land. In 1952, they helped win passage of a law that allowed immigrants born in Japan—the Issei—to become citizens.

Many of these trends were continued by the *Sansei*—the third generation. These children of the Nisei had little involvement in Japanese institutions, pursued educational and professional success, and became involved in politics. It was the politically active Sansei who led the movement to redress—an apology to those who had been imprisoned during the war.

REDRESS

The federal government had made a half-hearted effort to repay Japanese Americans for their economic losses just after the war. Congress passed The Japanese American Evacuation Claims Act in 1948, pledging to reimburse the victims. In actuality, payments were limited only to "damages to or loss of real or personal property." They would not cover any mental or physical suffering that resulted from the imprisonment. In addition, payments were based on 1942 prices, unreasonably low. By 1950, only 137 claims had been settled, and people were forced to take as little as $2,500 on a claim of $75,000. The record over the years was not much better. In the end, 26,568 claims totaling $148 million were filed. Only $37 million was paid out.

Beginning in the 1970s, Japanese Americans began a movement to have justice done. The Japanese American Citizens League, the National Coalition for Redress and Reparations, and the National Council for Japanese American Redress all began to work toward a new goal. They asked the federal government to compensate Japanese Americans for the losses they had suffered. These groups struggled for many years to

convince Congress to pass this law. As a first step, Congress agreed in 1980 to create the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians. The CWRIC heard testimony from more than 750 witnesses, most of them Japanese Americans who had suffered imprisonment. Its report, issued in 1983, was titled *Personal Justice Denied*. The commission was frank in its findings. The CWRIC concluded that the imprisonment resulted from "race prejudice, war hysteria, and failure of political leadership." It urged that Congress pass a law granting compensation of $20,000 to each person still alive who had suffered imprisonment.

Shortly after the CWRIC held its hearings, Fred Koramatsu made a formal appeal that his 1943 conviction had been based in error. Judge Marilyn Patel ruled that the government had withheld evidence when it originally tried the case. She found that the decision had been unjust and unfair. This decision helped pave the way for the law passed by Congress.

Daniel Inouye, Spark Matsunaga, Robert Matsui, and Norman Mineta, all Japanese Americans, pushed Congress to put the CWRIC's recommendations into law. Finally, in 1988, Congress passed and President Ronald Reagan signed into law the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. The Act called for a full apology by the U.S. government and payment to be made to surviving Japanese Americans who had been imprisoned. The following year, President George Bush signed into law another act that made these payments mandatory. In 1990 the first nine redress payments were made to former prisoners.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why did the WRA want to release the prisoners?
2. What officials wanted to end the imprisonment? Why?
3. Why did some prisoners hesitate to leave the camps?
4. Discuss the first steps taken to compensate the imprisoned Japanese Americans. Were they successful? Why or why not?
5. What positive developments for Japanese Americans occurred in the 1980s?

PROJECTS

1. Study the "Farming in Michigan" brochure, in the first screen of the "Returning to America" topic of the *Executive Order 9066* CD-ROM. Why did the WRA promote settlement outside the West Coast?
2. Read the excerpt from the book *People in Motion* in the second screen of the "Returning to America" topic. Summarize the costs to Japanese Americans of the loss of their freedom.
3. In the "Profiles" section, click on Kiichi Saito and then review the document represented by the U.S. seal. Explain how this document represented a change in longstanding U.S. policy.
4. The state of California has erected an historical marker at the site of the Manzanar camp. It reads, in part, "May the injustices and humiliation suffered here as a result of hysteria, racism and economic exploitation never emerge again." Write an editorial explaining how you think remembering the Japanese American imprisonment will lead to that goal.

Resources for Further Study

BOOKS

Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, *Personal Justice Denied* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982) offers the official U.S. government report from the 1980 investigation.

Roger Daniels, *Concentration Camps U.S.A.* (Holt, 1971) looks at the political aspect of the incarceration.

Roger Daniels, Sandra C. Taylor, and Harry H. L. Kitano, *Japanese Americans: From Relocation to Redress*, revised edition (University of Washington Press, 1991) collects several articles and essays, including first-person accounts and the findings of historians.

Leslie T. Hatamiya, *Righting a Wrong* (Stanford University Press, 1993) offers a detailed account of the work behind passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which offered compensation to Japanese Americans.

Bill Hosokawa, *Nisei* (William Morrow, 1969) tells the story of the second-generation Japanese Americans.

Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston, *Farewell to Manzanar* (Houghton Mifflin, 1973) is a moving memoir of life in the camps. (See below under "Films.")

Peter Irons, *Justice at War* (Oxford University Press, 1983) studies the legal cases that arose from the imprisonment.

Ellen Levine, *A Fence Away from Freedom* (Putnam's, 1995) includes first-person accounts from more than 30 people.

Paul R. Spickard, *Japanese Americans* (Twayne, 1996) is an overview of Japanese Americans from the 1800s to today.

Ron Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore* (Little, Brown, 1989) is a general history of Asian Americans.

John Tateishi, *And Justice for All* (Random House, 1984) collects the memories of many who lived in the camps.

Michi Nishiura Weglyn, *Years of Infamy: The Untold Story of America's Concentration Camps*, updated edition (University of Washington Press, 1996) is one of the earliest histories of the camps, written by a survivor. It includes reproductions of important documents.

FILMS

Conversations: Before the War/After the War (1985) explores the long-term effects of the imprisonment; available from the Japanese American National Museum.

Farewell to Manzanar (1976) is based on Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston's book; rights belong to MCA/Universal.

Guilty by Reason of Race is an NBC-news documentary; contact NBC.

Something Strong Within (1994) shows life in the camps, including footage from home movies; available from the Japanese American National Museum.

Topaz is a home movie filmed in secret in the Topaz camp; available through Videofinders.

Several films are available from NAATA Distribution, in San Francisco:
The Color of Honor (1988)
Days of Waiting (1988)
Family Gathering (1988)
Hito Hata: Raise the Banner (1980)
Manzanar (1971)
Meeting at Tule Lake (1994)
A Personal Matter: Gordon Hirabayashi vs. the United States (1992)
Starting Over: Japanese Americans After the War (1996)
Tanforan: Race Track to Assembly Center (1995)
Unfinished Business (1986)